

A N

APPEAL TO THE SCRIPTURES,
CONCERNING
THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH:

Wherein this Assurance, as founded on the direct Testimony of GOD, is demonstrated to be absolutely essential—to the very Being of a Christian,—to the Enjoyment of every Christian Privilege,—and to the Performance of every Christian Duty.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND;

Occasioned by a late Charge of ANTONOMIANISM
against the Author.

The SECOND EDITION, with considerable Enlargements,
and additional Answers to the most obvious and
general Objections.

By WILLIAM BROOKSBANK.

—We have known and believed the Love which GOD hath to us.
1 JOHN iv. 16.

Sold, on Thursdays, at the Chapels in Dudley Court,
Crown-Street, Soho, LONDON; and at the Foot of
Carrubber's Close, EDINBURGH.

(PRICE TWO-PENCE.)

THE HISTORY OF THE
SCOTTISH CHURCH
IN A SERIES OF LECTURES

BY JAMES HODGE, D.D.,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
AND AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,"
"THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND," &c.

IN A SERIES OF LECTURES

ON THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,
BY JAMES HODGE, D.D.



BY JAMES HODGE, D.D.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

1812.
BY JAMES HODGE, D.D.

A N

APPEAL TO THE SCRIPTURES,

CONCERNING

THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

WHEREAS Mr. Rowland Hill, and others in the same connection, have been pleased to charge me with what they think proper to call Antinomianism; and, by means of their unsupported accusations, have, to my great astonishment and grief, judged me censurable upon that account;—while, as they aim to smite me only through the sides of God's truth, I beg leave to pass over in silence all the low private mutterings of such prejudiced angry men, although invented and propagated through town and country, to my manifest hurt, and to the reproaching of the worthy name of Jesus whereby I am called; for which, I pray the Lord, for the sake of whose gospel I glory in suffering such ungenteel, unchristian usage, that they may be forgiven; permit me, with meekness, and with fear before the Lord, to give an account to you, and to the world, of the faith and hope which are in me; and that particularly with respect to the grand article, *the assurance of faith*; which I do indeed hold and preach to be the peculiar privilege and unalienable portion of all the saints of God, and that from the first moment of their believing the gospel, to the very finishing of their good confession, in committing their blessed spirits into the hands of their faithful Creator, being all preserved by the power of their own almighty Father, who has had mercy upon them, through faith unto eternal salvation. And for this, and this alone, both my ministry and character are

called into question, and laid under the censure of many tongues: how justly, let the candid judge. I do here, in humble dependence upon never-failing grace, as one neither ashamed of what I believe, nor afraid of the success of that honourable cause for which I am now, however weak and unworthy, called to contend, make a bold appeal to God, and to the word of his truth.

2. Now divine faith is described, by the Author and Finisher thereof, as experienced, by all its happy possessors, to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, Hebrews xi. 1. It is by faith therefore that we understand all we really know concerning God, his thoughts and his ways respecting ourselves, and all other persons and things.

3. Faith is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 6. Therefore it is no presumption either to possess or profess it, when it has pleased God to bestow such a precious gift of his own sovereign grace upon us. Faith is a work of God's own operation, Col. ii. 12. The good work which he hath begun in his saints, he will carry on and perform unto the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 6. Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of faith, Heb. xii.

2. He dwells in the hearts of his people by faith, Eph. iii. 17. He is known in their hearts, the hope of glory, Col. i. 27. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

4. The faith is one, Eph. iv. 5. One in all the elect of God, and common to them all as the one air they breathe, and the one light which they see, Tit. i. 1, 4. The same and equally precious in them all, as in the apostles themselves, 2 Pet. i. 1. Let Paul speak out for himself and all his brethren in the faith which was once delivered to the saints, for which they must all contend and suffer: He says, The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me; I do not frustrate the grace of God, Gal. ii. 20.

5. Faith is God's own peculiar act, manifesting the truth to our consciences; like the creation of the light, to shine; and of the eye, to see; so that men are as passive in receiving thereof, as the blind in receiving sight:

sight : let Paul declare if it be not so ; God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

6. If faith is described by the name of repentance, as a conversion or change of mind from death to life ; then it is God that granteth that repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18. Jesus is exalted to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins, Acts v. 31. It is God, say believers, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, Col. i. 13. Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, James i. 18. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Pet. i. 23. As many as received him, to them gave he power (privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them who believed on his name ; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 12.

7. Thus by his grace he hath made us what we are, and not we ourselves ; God hath made the difference : what we are, and what we have, we have received : saved not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy, because he would have mercy : not of works, lest any man should boast ; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Eph. ii. 9.

8. Moreover, faith cometh by hearing, and that hearing by the word of God, Rom. x. 17. He that receiveth his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true—He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life : he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him, John iii. 36. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself ; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us (who be-

lieve that record) eternal life: and this life is in his Son: He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe (to the end) on the name of the Son of God, 1 John v. 9, &c.

9. Thus in all things upon God's single, self-evident, unsupported authority,—authority unsupported, impossible to be supported by the collateral testimony of any other voucher besides himself, who is the alone witness, and the alone judge of all his own matters. Let every man be fully persuaded (assured) in his own mind, Rom. xiv. 5. Hast thou faith? have it for thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth. And he that doubteth (what God declareth to be right, and good, and true) is condemned on that account; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, Rom xiv. 22, &c. Now the maxim here given, although applied to a particular case, is evidently universal, and equally applicable to all cases both of principle and practice; as it is also written in another place, and applied in every case, respecting the conduct of man. But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is (what he really is, and hath declared himself to be), and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6.

10. So if men do not believe a lie, and worship in vain, not knowing what they worship, they must receive (that is, believe) the word of God as declared by his own inspired servants, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually also in all who believe it, 1 Thess. ii. 12. and bringeth forth fruit, as the Holy Ghost witnesseth of the Colossians, from the day they hear it, and know the grace of God in the truth, Col. i. 6. For faith worketh by love; love, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth—Faith purifieth the heart; and is fruitful in every good word and work; bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are acceptable to God through the Lord Jesus Christ—Faith issues in works,
and

and is shewed by works—works of faith and labours of love, expressive of patience and hope, as in Abraham, Rahab, and all the saints; as witness God himself speaking in all the scriptures, from the alpha to the omega of his own revelation.

11. In proportion as we cease to give ear to man, and give ourselves up to the sole direction of those infallible oracles of truth, we shall find light breaking in upon us from every quarter, demonstrating clear as a sun-beam, this eternal truth, That there is not a single instance of one saint of God, standing this day upon all the records of the Holy Ghost, from righteous Abel down to Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom they slew between the porch and the altar, nor from him down to John the divine, the last survivor of all the apostles of the Lord, who did not stand, preserved by almighty power, in the full assurance of faith, rejoicing in hope of the glory to be fully revealed at the coming of the Lord, from the first-hour of being translated into that marvellous light, even to the death, when faith was swallowed up in vision, and hope in perfect enjoyment; and who did not accordingly, taught by that grace of God, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by a confession and conversation becoming the same.

12. Inquire of the Lord the Spirit, concerning his own celebrated martyr Abel, now spoken of; was it not given to him, to be fully assured of his own interest in God his Saviour; whom he believed, and whom by faith he pleased? and, being now dead, doth he not yet speak, and cry, louder than ever his own blood cried; for vengeance against the shedder thereof, Peace, peace to all the imitators of his faith, through the enjoyment of the same privilege, and acceptance of themselves, with all their offerings of gratitude and praise, acceptable to God through the one Mediator Jesus Christ, and the powerful ministration of the other Comforter the Holy Ghost?

13. Was not Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who prophesied of the coming of the Lord with the thousand thousands of his saints, who walked with God, whom God translated without tasting of death, who before his translation obtained this testimony, that he pleased

pleased God; was not he, I say, perfectly assured, during all the space of his walk with God, that he was perfectly personally reconciled to him with whom he walked, and whom by faith he pleased; for how can two walk together except they be agreed, and mutually know that they are agreed?

14. Was not Noah, the preacher and heir of the righteousness of God by faith, perfectly assured of his own personal acceptance with his God and Lord, whom he believed, and preached, feared, loved, and obeyed to the death?

15. Were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, sons and heirs together of the same promise and grace of eternal life, in a less assured and comfortable situation, with respect to their own personal justification and peace with God, their justifier, father, sun and shield, their exceeding rich and great reward, whom they all adored and served in their respective generations, walking in the very same steps of faith, in assured hope of a blessed resurrection, till the living God, to whom they lived and died, received them to himself, to live with him till he come again with them in glory, and make them shine out for ever-more with all his redeemed, like the sun in the kingdom of their Father? Even so, Father, because it hath seemed good in thy sight!

16. Were not Joseph, and Moses, and Job, and Caleb, and Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel the beloved and highly favoured of the Lord, Ezra, Nehemiah, with all the prophets and holy men of old, all recorded, to their everlasting remembrance, as jealous for the Lord God of Israel, with the whole cloud of witnesses wherewith we are encompassed, innumerable as the stars of the firmament, and like the sand upon the sea shore for multitude; now all crowned with glory and victory in the presence of their Father with exceeding joy, each one walking in his uprightness around the throne, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb; rejoicing, with the holy angels of God, over every sinner whom the Shepherd of Israel bringeth to repentance; and waiting with earnest expectation till the whole election of grace be brought into one; when all the heirs of the kingdom

kingdom shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God ;—were these, all these, or any one of these, from the hour of their first receiving the Holy Ghost, to remain within them a well of living water springing up to everlasting life, during the course of their pilgrimage and sojourning upon earth, until they were carried by the angels into their present everlasting mansions of bliss and praise in their Father's house, left to continue without the light of his countenance shining upon them—left to wander through the dark valley and shadow of death, as trembling slaves, without the assurance of their Father's love—left in darkness with respect to their interest in his grace, without the peace of God in their consciences ?

17. If such indeed was their melancholy case, deserted of God ; whom had they—what had they to support them ?—This world and the god of it were their foes—they were exposed as lambs to the mouths of lions—tossed like faggots into the fiery flames—subjected to the edge of the sword—had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment—they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, tortured, and examined concerning their faith and hope upon racks and wheels—were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goats-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy) : they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth—Such was their wayfaring, and such their fare in the pursuit of a better country !

18. If they had not had meat to eat which the world knew not of, and a joy which strangers to God intermeddle not with, how could they have begun such a race ? how could they have gone on, and persevered to the end ? How could they have engaged in such a warfare, and also overcome through the blood of the Lamb, not loving their lives to the death for the testimony of Jesus ; if he, the Captain of their salvation, had not led them, led them on, carried them safely through, and given them more than victory, through the knowledge of himself as their light, their life, their peace, their perfect joy and everlasting crown ?

19. If otherwise it was; and they were left orphans, comfortless, mourning an absent God, to fare on, along the dreary length of this waste howling wilderness, wandering in the dark alone, in the midil of all their worse than mortal foes, deserted, forsaken, forlorn, without the knowledge of their interest in their Saviour's love, without the experience of his very present help in trouble;—Solve this riddle, ye deceitful workers! ye ministers of Satan! who hold it as the cardinal point, even the hinging article of all your doctrine, that the saints of God have in all ages been, and still are, many a long weary day, week, month and year, nay, some during their whole life-time, in doubts and fears concerning their own personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, without certainty, without assurance, whether they are appointed to wrath, or to obtain eternal salvation through faith in his blood.

20. If this your constant ever-and-anon repeated, tale, so full of sorrow! so full of infernal woe! be true; and if ye be indeed belyed, and are not the messengers of Satan, sent to buffet the saints of God; but the very ministers of Christ, the real helpers of their faith and joy—explain to us, who in the name of God the Lord demand it of you, how all these saints, in former days, endured as seeing the invisible God; having an eye to the recompence of reward; chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season:—How the most distressed of them all, in the most distressed circumstances, could maintain his unabated confidence in God, and say, when he could say no more, Though he slay me, yet I will put my trust in him: for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.

21. But what do we talk? or ask of, at the hand of men?—Is not the Holy Ghost himself witness, that all these embraced the promises, were fully persuaded of them, lived in the faith of them, died in the faith of them, obtained of God a good report through the faith of them,

them, and are now inheriting them in the rest of God?

21. It will be in vain here to object the opinions of Henry, Hammond, Hervey, Doddridge, Watts, and other commentators and sermonizers ancient or modern, in opposition to the plain decisive voice of the scriptures themselves. If it be alledged, that these Old Testament saints were not without their personal sins—Who denies it? But God affirms, that neither were they without their faith, which himself bestowed upon them, and preserved in them, till he received them into his own immediate presence and joy in paradise.

23. By this their faith of the gospel, which is the power and wisdom of God to the salvation of all who believe it, they were enabled to overcome all their difficulties, and to triumph, through the blood of their High Priest, over all their sins, and over all their foes. Was not their Redeemer and Intercessor as mighty and powerful to prevail in their behalf, and their Father in him as faithful and just to forgive them then, as now and for ever?

24. If it be urged in another view, from a most erroneous and blasphemous sense imposed upon the holy oracles of God, That the greater part of those called the people of God were gross idolaters, and notoriously abandoned persons in their moral behaviour and conduct, even worse than those of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the other nations around them; and how could such persons have the assurance of faith, and the comfortable enjoyment of an interest in God as their Saviour, while they wallowed in such a mire of sin? Answer. They are not all the Israel of God, who are of Israel according to the fleshly generation: and though such persons in the writings of the prophets are called God's people and children, as descended of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and otherwise blessed with many temporal privileges, while the oracles of God were in their hands, which they disbelieved, wrested, and abused to their own destruction; yet they were all the while in reality declared by the Lord to be the devil's slaves, children in whom there was no faith: and as in fact they, in such an estate, had no fellowship with God;

so neither had they any title to, nor enjoyment of those consolations of the Holy Ghost, which the real sons and daughters of God rejoice in, as their peculiar privilege and everlasting portion.

25. Wherefore it is evident, that they are no better than devils incarnate, with regard to their designs and operations against the souls of men, who hang out those manifest idolaters and blasphemers of Judah and Jerusalem, as described, for example, in the 2d, 3d and 4th chapters of Jeremiah, and in the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, for the saints and sons of God by the faith of Jesus Christ; and so infer, that those who are actually washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of their God, through the belief of the truth, may be in such a profligate condition, and of such an abandoned character; and consequently, without the assurance of their interest in Christ.

26. If the congregations of such men are not filled with hardened, shameless, hypocritical whoremongers, harlots, drunkards, and detestable Sodomites, it is to me fully as great a wonder as all the wonders of the land of Egypt and the field of Zoan!

27. But, leaving this to be considered by those who are most concerned, all objections against the assurance of faith, drawn from the present remainders and workings of indwelling sin in the saints of God, while in connection with the body of this death, shall be answered in due season.

28. Mean while be it observed, that as it was with the Old, so is it precisely with the New Testament saints: for is not Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever? Had they not the same eternal law of righteousness, the same everlasting gospel, when it pleased God to speak at divers times, and in sundry manners, unto the fathers by the prophets, as since he began in these last times to speak unto us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, by his Son, who is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, God over all blessed for ever? Was the gospel preached unto them? So it is unto us. Did the word, mingled with faith, profit them who were joined unto it by that faith? So is it still the power

power of God and the wisdom of God unto the salvation of those who believe it.

29. Hear the Lord, the one Shepherd of all the Israel of God, beloved and true; he says, I know my sheep—Is this assertion true? Then who dares say, that his following words maintain a lye. And I am known of mine; they hear my voice and they follow me; and a stranger they will not follow, because they know not the voice of a stranger; and I give to all my sheep eternal life; neither shall any of them perish; nor shall any pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. John x.

30. And says the Holy Ghost to all believers of the gospel, Ye are all the sons of God, by the faith of Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 26.—By what? By doubting, fearing, and disbelieving your interest in Christ? No, verily, as God is true; but by the faith, the evidence, knowledge, demonstration, recommended, manifested to your consciences by the Holy Ghost, the alone infallible witness to you of Jesus Christ, who hath loved, sanctified, and washed you from your sins in his own blood, and made you kings, and priests unto God and your Father for ever and ever—For as many as have been baptized into Christ (that is, taught and anointed by the Holy Ghost, and made one spirit with the Lord Christ) have put on Christ—Therefore if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 27, &c. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6.

31. Then all the sons of God, by the faith of Christ, have the Spirit of Christ sent forth into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Who dares presume to make any exception where God has made none among all sons of God?

32. Moreover, God says to every individual child of God. Wherefore thou art no more a servant (a slave) but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ, Gal. iv. 7. Now the man who does not suppose the God of truth, telling a falsehood here, must absolutely conclude, that every child of God whatever, by faith, believes himself to be not a slave, but a son and

an heir of God through Christ: for God himself declares it to be so; and if one do not believe what God affirms, he makes God a lyar, and proves himself thereby to be a child of the devil, whose lusts he doth.

33. And this is amply confirmed by the next words, Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did service to them which by nature are no gods. But now that ye have known God, or rather are known of him, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Gal. iv. 8, &c. Hence it follows again, that before one is apprehended or known of God, and so comes to the knowledge of God as his God and Father, he doth not, he cannot serve God—Whom then doth such a one serve? God says, Those who by nature are no gods, that is, devils.

34. Expressly to this purpose, it is affirmed by the saints, upon the authority of the Holy Ghost, saying, We know that we are of God, and the whole world (except the believers of the truth alone) lieth in wickedness (the wicked one). And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. 1 John v. 19, &c.

35. So if we would not say, that the Holy Ghost hath taught these saints to tell a lye, concerning the knowledge and understanding given them, respecting the true God, and their own happy estate in him; we must of necessity say, that they are perfectly assured, as of the being of the true God the Son, Jesus Christ, so of their being in him, and having in him eternal life; even as certainly as they are assured by the true God, who hath had mercy upon them, that the whole of the unbelieving world around them lieth in the power of Satan, and in the same condemnation with him under the wrath of God.

36. Thus, to deny the personal, full and perfect assurance that all saints have of their interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, as sons and heirs of God, even joint-heirs with Christ, is to deny the Son, and the Father, and the

the Holy Ghost, and openly to hold that these Three who bear record in heaven, who are one, are a lyar!—Hear, O heavens! Be astonished, O earth!

37. These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, John xvii. 1, &c. These words are explained and illustrated by the last quotation, wherein what is here affirmed of the Father, as the only true God, is affirmed also of the Son; because the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; so that he who hath seen the Son and known him, hath in him seen and known the Father also, because the Father and the Son are One.

38. Now, upon the whole, it is evident here also, as that the Lord speaks truth, that those who know the only true God in his own revealed character, which is one, possess eternal life, and know that they do possess it; even as he who sees the light, hath in himself the knowledge that he sees it: so those who know the joyful sound, are greatly blessed; and know the blessing they have obtained from the God of their salvation.

39. If you further ask, What is the revealed character of God, in the knowledge whereof the possessor of that knowledge is so greatly blessed and joyful? Let the Lord God himself declare his own eternally blessed and blessing name, saying, I am the Lord, and there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me, Isa. xlvi. 2.

40. Therefore, those who do not know God, as their own God, the just God and their own Saviour; do not know the one living and true God at all.

41. Again, In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel (the true Israel, begotten of God by the word of truth) be justified, and shall glory, Isa. xlvi. 25.—And lo, how the saints with one voice and spirit re-echo back to God the praise of all this grace and truth, on them bestowed, by them possessed and gloried in, as all their salvation, and all their desire!—Justified by faith, we

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God—and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God (towards us) is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us—God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy (glory) in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement, (even the reconciliation, the covering of our sins in his blood).—Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound (appear to be sin); but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. v. 1, &c.

42. Such is the experience of the saints, of all the saints; unless you alledge and prove, that the God of the saints has deceived them, and blessed them only with a lie, and a fool's paradise!

43. That this honour, privilege, and unspeakable enjoyment, of knowing their state and acceptance with God their Father, is to all the saints evident as the very existence of God himself, and their own existence in him, the scriptures uniformly, universally declare;—if not, what mean these words? If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9.—and what is the office and work of the Spirit of Christ in those whom he thus possesseth? Why, he leads them and guides them into all the truth, peace, and joy in believing.

44. Let Paul here also speak for himself and brethren—There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death—They that are after the flesh, do mind the things

things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit—So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you—For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness (brings a complete proof to) our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ—And we know, that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter). Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 1, &c.

45. Thus, as the speech and preaching of the apostles was (like that of the prophets before them) not

with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power; and the faith of all the believers of their testimony stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God: so all believers of the gospel, in all ages, places, and circumstances, can boldly say, without presumption, to the praise of the glory of his free, sovereign, eternal, pre-destinating, distinguishing grace, who hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world (as elsewhere described, the spirit of bondage and of slavish fear, that is, the spirit of error, the devil, who ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience and unbelief, holding them in blindness and bondage under him, under wrath, leading them captive at his pleasure whithersoever he will); but we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God—For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 4, &c.

46. From whence this stands forth as the cloudless sun at mid-day, a truth, divinely demonstrated, shining from the face of the whole heaven-inspired record, as God himself is truth, and speaketh truth, That the assurance, the full assurance of faith, even the invincible infallible certainty, bestowed upon all the believers of the gospel by him who has had mercy upon them, that they themselves are the sons and heirs of God in Christ Jesus, whereof every one in particular hath the witness in himself, is absolutely essential to their very being and calling into that state of acceptance with God, as their own God and Father, who hath loved them with an everlasting love, and saved them with an everlasting salvation, according to his own eternal, immutable purpose, power and grace, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.

47. Moreover, as this assurance of faith is essential to the very being of a Christian, from the first moment of his being called unto a life of faith upon the Son of God, even unto the final issue thereof, which is the salvation of his soul; so it is also absolutely essential, and indispensably necessary, as a fundamental requisite, to

the

the personal enjoyment of every Christian privilege, and to the performance of every Christian duty.

48. This is implied in the very nature of the thing, and indeed in the very frame and constitution of the human nature; which the Father of our spirits, the Father of mercies, considers, and according to which, he speaks to us of his own things in such plain language as he hath been pleased to make us acquainted with; accommodating his expressions and manner of speech according to those ideas which he hath made us capable of receiving, as men.

49. Thus he says, A son honoureth his father and a servant his master; if I then be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? — Now what son, among men, honoureth his father, without the implied consciousness of the mutual relation wherein they stand with respect to one another? And what servant honoureth his master, without having in himself the personal certainty of the reality of his condition as a servant; and the respective difference in point of character, condition and circumstance, between him and his master?

50. The truth is, there is scarce one name known among men, importing nearness, dearness and intimacy of relation between man and man, or signifying the close strictness of a natural, indissoluble union between one thing and another upon earth, which it hath not pleased God the Lord to adopt into the language of scripture, and use as an expressive figure, or resemblance of that divine, spiritual, unalterable union which himself hath constituted, and declared to subsist between himself and every one of those highly favoured ones, whom he hath blessed with the belief of his own saving truth.

51. Are they represented in their natural estate, as having been under the law, like a woman under covenant to her husband, subject to all his lawful will; and so, in that condition, under the wrath of God, under his curse, for breach of that law of eternal obligation? Behold, now that God has given them to believe the testimony concerning Jesus, they are by him declared dead to that law, and that law to them (namely in that respect

respect wherein they were formerly bound) by the dead body of Jesus, and married to their new husband Jesus, who is raised from the dead; that according to this new relation, they may bring forth fruit unto God; that they may serve this their new husband, in newness of spirit, loving, delighting in, and serving this royal law of their liberty, now magnified and made honourable in this their Husband and Mediator's blood, Rom. vii. 5, &c.

52. Those who are joined in marriage, are one flesh; but those who are joined to the Lord, are one Spirit with the Lord. What, know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1 Cor. vi. 19, &c. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.—Now, how can one walk according to this new and honourable state and relation, without believing, and being certain of the reality and existence thereof? Could Sarah reverence her husband, and call him lord, without being assured that she was actually his lawful spouse, and he the guide of her youth, and of her way? So neither can Christians in truth call Jesus Lord, unless in their consciences, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, they know him so to be indeed and in truth.

53. Is he the vine? They are the branches. Is he the good olive tree? They are ingrafted into him, and partake of his sap and fatness. Is he the Shepherd? They are his sheep. Is he the prince of peace? They are the people of his peace. Is he Christ? They are Christians, anointed with his Spirit.

54. Little children, says the apostle, I have written unto you, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake—because ye have known the Father—I have not written to you because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and that there is no lie of the truth: for ye have received an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all (these) things—and even as that same anointing (of the Holy Ghost) hath taught you, ye shall abide in him, 1 John ii. 12, &c.

55. The children also, unashamed, without presumption,

tion, say, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called (what the Father hath made us) the sons of God—Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: and every one that hath this hope (of seeing the Lord, and being like him, founded in the assurance of his own personal sonship, as above declared) purifieth himself even as he is pure; 1 John iii. 1, &c.

56. But why multiply proofs and instances to this purpose, which could have no end, unless one were to transcribe the whole scripture, with its self-evident consequences, speaking of these matters, from the beginning of Genesis to the conclusion of the Revelation?

57. Are not all the epistles addressed, not to the openly profane unbelievers, nor to the close hypocritical professing infidels, but to the real saints and faithful, the beloved of God, called to be saints, called into the knowledge and fellowship of Jesus Christ? To those who have obtained the same precious faith with the apostles? To those who are sanctified of God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called? To the holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling? To those who are chosen of God unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth? To those who are addressed in this manner: Ye are all the children of the light, and of the day; ye are not of the night, nor of darkness; God hath not appointed you unto wrath, but to obtain (eternal) salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ; forasmuch as ye know ye were redeemed with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; that, as it is written, whosoever glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

58. And accordingly as persons in, and made conscious that they are in such a blessed state and situation, by the good hand of their God upon them, they are called upon, and led by him who hath called them, un-

to a behaviour becoming their new relations and privi-
leges.

59. God is your Father; walk worthy of him, as dear children, holy and beloved; walking in love as Christ hath loved you, and given himself for you, a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling favour unto God. Ye are sealed by the Holy Ghost unto the day of redemption; therefore grieve him not. As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you; forgive ye one another. As Christ hath forgiven you, so also do ye forgive those against whom ye have a quarrel, or just ground of offence. As Christ hath loved you: so do ye also love one another. God hath laid down his life for you; and ye ought to lay down your lives for the brethren. If Christ, your Lord and Master, hath washed your feet; ye ought to wash one another's feet: that is, do all manner of kind and humble offices, with meekness and condescension, one to another.

60. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. Ye are risen together with Christ; therefore seek the things which are above—When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory; therefore mortify your members which are upon the earth—Ye have put off the old man, and put on the new man, which is created in knowledge, righteousness, and the holiness of truth, after the image of him who created him; therefore lie not, but speak the truth one to another in love—And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks unto God and your Father by him. Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's; therefore all things are yours, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, life or death, things present or things to come, all are yours. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing with prayer and supplication, make your requests known unto God, who careth for you; so that

you

you may boldly say, The Lord is my helper. He hath said, I will never leave you ; I will never forsake you. Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing ; giving thanks always for all things unto God and your Father.

61. Thus all personal holiness and obedience flow from personal assurance ; as saith the apostle, I run not uncertainly ; I fight not as one that beateth the air ; but this one thing I do, as he who striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things, I keep my body under, that is, through the Spirit, I mortify every corrupt affection and lust—I know whom I have believed—I believe, and therefore I speak, speak what I know by the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am set for the defence of the gospel—I have laboured—yet not I, but the grace of God in me : By the grace of God, I am what I am.

62. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (fidelity, or faithfulness, in this place), meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law (to condemn them ; for they are sanctified, justified, and washed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God). And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh (the corrupt nature) with the affections and lusts (thereof). If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit—If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature ; old things are passed away, all things are become new.

63. Thus all Christian obedience proceeds from Christian principles, new principles communicated by the Holy Ghost, faith and love : We love him because he first loved us—We believe and perceive the love of God towards us ; and therefore we love him—we love him, because he hath frankly forgiven us all that we owed, even justified us freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and made us heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

64. It is by the grace of God which hath appeared to us, and brought us salvation, that we are taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world ;—looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of

of the great God, even our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

65. The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for us all, then we all died in him (unto sin), that we who live (by his death for us) should no more live unto ourselves; but unto him who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. By the mercies of God, manifested unto us, we are moved to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable before God; which is our reasonable service.

66. Thus that species of love which is called gratitude; or thankfulness, and filial desire towards God, for his fatherly love manifested unto us, is the pure fruit of the Spirit of faith in us, and the immediate spring of all good works by us performed, through his own sole influencing power of grace and truth, to his own glory and praise.

67. Now how can one be grateful, or thankfully disposed for a favour, be it what it may, although bestowed, if he is unconscious that it is bestowed and actually received?

68. It is true, as God is witness, that God is good to the evil and the unthankful; that he makes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, upon the just and upon the unjust; yet the unbelievers, not being reconciled to him by the death of Jesus Christ, are enmity against God, and can be denominated by no better designation than that of haters of God, enemies of God in their minds, and much more by wicked works; so that all they think, and say, and do, is termed by the Lord only the doing the lusts of their own father, who is the devil—that is, doing what the devil would have them to do, and no more!

69. For being without faith, and, as God himself expresses it, holding God for a lyar, the whole of their works and motions is the mere natural effect of unbelief, alienation from, and enmity against God, even sin, the wages whereof is death—Their prayers, their sacrifices,

Sacrifices, their plowings, are sin, the abomination of the soul of God!

7c. If they pretend to come to God, they do not walk by the way that leads to the Father; for Jesus is that way, the truth, and the life: so that unless treading upon the Son of God, counting his blood an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Holy Ghost, be the way of pleasing God, and working righteousness, all unbelievers are workers of iniquity, and, as such, under the wrath and abiding curse of God, bound over to the vengeance of eternal fire!

71. And this, in the way of a just contrast, leads to this undeniable consequence, according to the express declaration of scripture, that every particular act of worship and obedience to God implies in it the present, personal, absolute assurance of faith in the heart of the obedient worshipper, as the essential, immediate, and only possible source thereof.

72. For nothing can be outwardly expressed to the glory of God, the Searcher of the heart, that is not first inwardly impressed upon the heart.

73. Thus if Abraham, for example, gave obedience to the commandment concerning circumcision, it was because he was first inwardly circumcised in heart, fully persuaded in his own mind, giving glory to God, as a true witness, and a faithful justifier of the ungodly believing in Jesus—if he offered up Isaac, it was because he loved and believed his God, his Justifier and Father.

74. If the saints in like manner were baptized with water, it was because they were first baptized with the Holy Ghost, and so, according to the commandment, they publicly acknowledged and confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus, and that they were washed in his blood by the ministration of the Holy Ghost from all their sins.

75. If they observed the Christian sabbath, it was because they acknowledged therein the commandment and example of their Lord, and that he died for them, and rose again the third day, the first day of the week, according to the scriptures.

76. If they shewed forth the Lord's death, it was because it was his express commandment, and they were

given therein to discern his body broken for them, and his blood shed for the remission of their sins.

77. If they prayed, it was because they were commanded, and they believed God to be their Father, who required them to worship him in that manner, saying, Our Father—Behold, he prayeth! saith the Lord, of believing Paul—How can they call on him on whom they have not believed? Saith the Holy Ghost, I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting—Ask, but ask in faith, nothing wavering; for let not that man that wavereth think that he shall receive any thing of God—When thou prayest, have faith in God. Believe that ye shall receive those things which ye ask, (according to the revealed will of God) and ye shall have them—Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you, saith the Lord.

78. But to go through all the proofs and illustrations of this topic, as said before, is to go through the whole scriptures; wherein nothing is plainer, not even that God created the heavens and the earth, with all their hosts, very good, than this proposition, That the enjoyment of every Christian privilege, and the performance of every Christian duty, can flow only from the personal assurance that a man has in himself, of being a child of God through the faith of Jesus Christ.

79. Am I assured, by the testimony of God, of my connection with Adam in sin and death, of my being under the law, a child of wrath by nature, and that I cannot be justified by mine own works? Behold, the testimony of God is equally express, is equally plain, and certain, that, by Jesus Christ, all who believe the record concerning him, are justified and saved by what they believe: read the Acts of the Apostles, particularly the thirteenth chapter, the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, with the whole connection of scripture verity—And if you do not believe it, you are absolute atheists, and blasphemers, condemned of yourselves—whose damnation is just!

80. As to objections against this assurance of faith, now contended for, drawn from the Psalms; let the Psalms, which speak of the sufferings of Christ, and of the

the following glory, be interpreted by the New Testament, as the Holy Ghost hath pointed out their meaning therein; and let the Holy Ghost himself thereby decide the difference!

81. As to objections extracted from manifest wrestings of the other parts of the prophetic writings, let the same answer, in the mean time, suffice in general: yet as there is much harping and punning upon the names given to the national Israel, as God's people and children, whose manners and spirits are resembled to those of Sodom and Gomorrah, and declared to be even worse; be it here again-remarked, and added to what has been already said upon that head, that if any person will be at the pains to read and compare the first chapter of Isaiah, for instance, from beginning to end, particularly the ninth verse, with Romans ix. 29. he will find, that the people whom God is said to have nourished and brought up as children, who also have revolted from him, and gone away backward, such as all those called backsliders in the prophets, without exception of one person, are not the true Israel of God, the believers of his truth; but, on the other hand, are manifestly distinguished, as a race of Sodomites and idolaters, from the true Israel of God; which true Israel, or believers of the truth, are called the remnant which God hath reserved for himself, as witnesses for himself, and vessels of mercy whom he hath chosen and called for his own praise!

82. Lastly, as to objections against the assurance of faith, manufactured and spun with no small craft andunning deceit, of those who lie in wait to deceive, from the presence and working of indwelling sin, remaining in those who believe the gospel, and who are declared to be justified by the divine righteousness there-represented, and imputed unto them that so believe; —

83. It is answered, that the assurance of faith, pleaded for, is not built upon the absence, and not working of indwelling sin in believers; but upon the presence and working of the indwelling Spirit of God in them: for although the fruits of the flesh, or corrupt nature, are manifest in them, and by none really perceived in a true light, and mourned over, but by the believers

themselves; yet the fruits of the Spirit are no less manifest in them: and these two, the flesh and the Spirit, the old nature and the new, one's natural self and the Holy Ghost, are distinct from, and contrary to, one another: the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and as Paul said, if he had a law in his members striving against the law in his mind, he said and meant thereby, that he had a law in his mind striving against the said law in his members.

84. And from this conflict all believers, as well as Paul, cry out, each one for himself, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ the Lord. So then I myself, with my mind (as influenced, and renewed in the spirit of my mind, by the Holy Ghost) serve the law of God; but with my flesh (all that is naturally within me as a corrupt creature, all that is not wrought in me by the Holy Ghost himself) I serve the law of sin. See Rom. vii. Gal. v. and 1 John i.

85. Now, reader, if thou art a saint of God, a believer of God's truth, by the light which thou hast received from the scriptures, consider what passes within thee, and thou wilt demand no other kind of answer concerning all these matters from me, nor from any other of thy brethren of the self same experience, desiring earnestly, as thou thyself also most certainly dost, to contend for the one faith (the truth) once delivered to the saints.

86. Only permit me here to add, that in whatever respect Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, Job, David, or Jeremiah, with their brethren, Peter, Thomas, Paul, or any other disciple of the Lord, mentioned in the oracles of truth, may have been left to doubt, or fear, or feel in the hour of temptation and distress, during the whole course of their contention with all the powers of darkness, without them, or within them, till they overcame through the blood of the Lamb, through faith in his blood—I am here bold in my God, whom I also, through mercy given to me, serve, and desire to serve unto the death, with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, to give a formal challenge to all the opposers of the grace of the truth of the gospel of God in the world—defying them

them to prove, by one instance in all the scriptures; that any one of those saints of God was ever so deserted of God, as to doubt or fear whether God was his Father, the God of his salvation, his Justifier, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier—so that he could not say, even in his most perplexed moments, My God, my Saviour, my Lord and my God, meaning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, these Three who are One, by the Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father.

87. It will answer no purpose, to triflē with the Spirit of truth, and with the souls of men, by replying here in a jeering or indignant strain, as persons may find themselves affected, “What! could these saints maintain their confidence in God, their boasted assurance of faith, when they were asleep!—when they were drunk!—when they were engaged in the actual commission of sin!—Will Noah, David, Peter say so?” No verily, Sir; neither do I: but please to know and consider, that such is the present state of human nature in all men, even in the saints of God themselves, while in this body, encompassed with frailty and corruption, borne down and perplexed with infirmities, sinless some, and others sinful—that when a man is literally asleep, or in a state of intoxication, or seized with a fit, phrenzy, or temporary madness, from some one or other of which conditions none of the human race can claim a total exemption at all seasons; or confounded or over-powered with the superior force of any extreme passion or temptation whatsoever; or when the mind is distract-ed by means of some violent convulsion of one’s whole frame, diseased, unhinged, and lost, as it were, for a time—that then, in such circumstances, I say, a man cannot be supposed retaining his consciousness or confidence concerning any estate or relation whatsoever, wherein he may at other times rejoice, and act as becoming the same—But, when he awakes, recovers, and comes to himself again, the consciousness of his state, condition, and various relations wherein he really stands, will recur to his mind, and corresponding behaviour will of course ensue—If he has been overtaken in a fault, and fallen into the fire or into the water, he will repent and mourn before the Lord, confessing his sins,

kissing the rod, and crying, Abba, Father, pleading the faithfulness and justice of his God through a Mediator's blood for forgiveness.—So Peter wept bitterly, and David mourned before the Lord—Why mourn and weep? because they knew they were sons, and had sinned; and now, restored by mercy, they watch and pray lest they enter again into temptation.

88. Moreover, as a further illustration of those supposed cases, wherein it is readily granted, that the saints, even the sons and servants of the most high God, according to their present condition in this world, beset with various corruptions, and temptations innumerable, for the trial and exercise of their faith, fortitude, and patience, may be grievously overtaken and caught at times—it ought to be observed, that, as it is with all sons and servants among men, situated in parallel circumstances, in the ordinary course of human life, to whom the saints are compared,—as such persons, in such cases, I say, are not, and cannot, according to the nature of things, be supposed conscious of, and actually thinking upon their respective characters and conditions in such circumstances; nor can it be said that they are acting according to the same; so neither are the sons and servants of God, when under the influence of temptation, acting according to their high character and happy relation; but rather doing the very reverse: but who, without the most manifest absurdity, can say, that those persons, when thoroughly awake, and come again to themselves, are not thoroughly conscious, even absolutely assured and certain of their respective habitual relations and circumstances; and that they do not again begin to act according to that consciousness and certainty of their state, as soon as they are happily recovered from their sleep, or temporary delirium, as I may call it? or that they can possibly so act, in any one instance, save from the recovered consciousness and certainty of their real state and character? So neither can one say that the case is not precisely the same with the sons and servants of God. For who that was not actually dreaming himself, or drunk, or mad, ever thought that a son or servant, although occasionally asleep, or in a fever, or phrenzy, might not, in the general

general tenor of his life, be awake and sober, and behave accordingly: even as a man when asleep neither really sees, nor hears; yet when awake, both sees, and hears, and reasons, and acts from a perfect consciousness of all his senses, condition and circumstances? So it is with the saints of God: and not as our adversaries most ridiculously and blasphemously alledge, that they can believe, and preach, and pray, and love, and fear, and obey God, according to his own revealed will, even at the same instant of time while they suppose them unconscious, ignorant, unassured of his love to them, and of their state of acceptance with him, as sons and servants, redeemed and justified through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. For, most undoubtedly, fear, love, and obedience, even in their least possible degrees, must suppose and imply their own essential originating principle, even faith, the belief, the present belief of the truth present to the mind, even the personal assurance and certainty of faith, and consequently the persons own particular interest as sons, heirs, and redeemed grateful servants, in God, as God, and their own God and Father, whom they thus accordingly believe, fear, love, and obey.

89. With regard to objections against this assurance of faith, pretended to be drawn, and urged with no small insolence, from the many exhortations to perseverance, and severe reproofs for actual sin and neglect of duty given to the saints, *passim*, through the whole testimony of God, I answer, what son is he whom his father doth not exhort, reprove, correct, and chasten for his profit? And is not this conduct an acknowledged proof on the father's part, that the person whom he so useth is not a bastard, but a son?—And so saith the Lord, As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: he zealous, therefore, and repent. If we speak of the saints and faithful at Corinth, for instance, to illustrate this point, let it be remarked, that their very designation, *saints and faithful*, denotes their personal assurance of faith, as descriptive of their peculiar state and character, known and acknowledged by themselves, as well as expressly asserted by the Holy Ghost: in consequence whereof, they are said to call upon the name of the

Lord

Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and God. Now this they could not do except they believed him to be so: For how can they call on him on whom they have not believed? Rom. x. 14. Moreover, they are declared, through the grace of God which is given them in Jesus Christ, to be enriched by him in all knowledge, and in all utterance: so that they come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who also confirms them unto the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ: for this reason, because God is faithful, by whom they were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. They are the temples of the Holy Ghost; their bodies are the members of Christ; they are one spirit with the Lord; Christ is in them, and they are in Christ; they are not their own, but bought with his blood; and God is witness that they know it.—In these, and all similar respects, according to what they have already attained, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are really spiritual, that is, taught, led, and influenced by the Spirit of grace and truth, given to them, dwelling, working, and manifesting himself by his own peculiar divine operations within them; but in all other respects wherein they are influenced, and led by their own natural passions and affections as men, through the power and energy of Satan, practising upon their simplicity, as upon unwary children, they are reproved, as being not spiritual, but as carnal, and walking as men, nay, upbraided with the name of babes, and not as persons of a full age and experience, having their senses exercised to godliness, to discern between good and evil.—In this view, thus they are addressed and reproved by the Holy Ghost, who hath undertaken their teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; that they, as sons of God, may be perfected, and by him thoroughly furnished to every good word and work.—Ye are yet carnal, (namely, in the respect there condescended upon, and justly condemnable in itself); for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For, while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos,

pollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every one? 1 Cor. iii. 3, &c.—So also with regard to their remaining pride, vain-glory and partiality respecting the incestuous person; their unseemly, unseasonable law-suits before heathen magistrates; their differences about their meats and their drinks; their eating of things sacrificed to idols; the uncomely behaviour of some of their most forward women in their assemblies; their neglect and abuse of the Lord's supper; their errors concerning the use and practice of spiritual gifts; their apparent countenancing for a season, or rather, not being sufficiently aware of, the blasphemous doctrines of some, respecting the resurrection of the dead; and several other such culpable things; yet in all such things, they stood corrected, reproved, and instructed by the word and power of God; insomuch that the apostle, who was the minister of God to them in all this service of love, expresses himself in this manner, with regard to one point, which was no doubt equally applicable to all points wherein they had erred for a season, and from which false steps in their conduct they had also been mercifully and seasonably restored.—Behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation (namely, against the evil thing) yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!—In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

90. If we come to the churches of Galatia, who, by means of certain judaizing teachers, deceitful workers and ministers of Satan, who had unawares crept in among them, had been, in like manner, hurt and shaken in their minds with respect to the cardinal point of the Christian doctrine, the hinging article of justification, which the apostles had taught them, which they also had believed, to be not by human works of obedience, either to the moral or ceremonial law, but only by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, declared to them, believed by them, and imputed to them, altogether without their own works, and independent of them,

them, whether good works or bad works : they are indeed declared to have been bewitched, as it were, in giving ear for a moment to such wolves in sheeps clothing ; but are declared at the same time to be all the sons of God by the faith of Jesus Christ, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; whereof the Holy Ghost, as has been already noticed, was witness to their spirits : and they were accordingly reclaimed from the unsuspected error of their deceiving leaders, and brought to glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, as well as their apostle, walking by the same rule, and minding the same things ; and grace mercy and peace were upon them, as upon the whole Israel of God — However, to guard against bad inferences, be it here carefully noticed, that these things in the first establishing of the churches, happened for our admonition only, and not for our imitation ; for if any man sin because the grace of God abounds, he is no believer of the gospel, but an infidel, whose damnation is just.

91. If we now consider the little children spoken of by the apostle John, it is evident, from reading the passage, that they are attested by the Holy Ghost, as has been already remarked, to be equally assured of their interest in God their Father and justifier, whom they know and love, as the young men and the fathers are, however otherwise they may be inferior in respect of age, knowledge, experience, and exercise in the Christian life and warfare : for it is not in the spiritual generation, as in the natural generation : for in the latter, the knowledge of one's father, is so far from being essential, that, in the nature of things, it is absolutely impossible that a new-born infant should know its parent ; but in the spiritual generation, the knowledge of God's being one's Father, is so absolutely essential, in the very nature of the thing itself, that it cannot possibly be without the knowledge thereof in the person so begotten of the will of God by the word of truth : for it is by this very knowledge, even this divine and consequently, infallible evidence communicated to them by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that they are the sons of God through the faith of Jesus, that they are begotten of the

the will of God, and manifested to be the Sons and heirs of God in Jesus the only begotten, the eternal Son of God.—To Jesus Christ, who is God over all, and blessed for ever, amen, be eternal praise ascribed by all the sons of God!

92. If we conclude this argument with considering, as in the sight of God, and in the light of his own infallible word, the epistles to the seven churches, as recorded in the book of the Revelation; we will find there, that the good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name, and calls them to repent; and that in every respect whereia they had fallen and gone astray; and undoubtedly his own sheep heard his voice, and followed him, and not a stranger; and were accordingly by him blessed with eternal life, and not one of them perished; neither was any able to pluck them out of the Father's hand: the Father and Son are one.—He who had mercy upon them led them.

93. Lastly, upon this head of answering objections, if we take a melancholy prospect of those mentioned by Peter and Jude, who are described by the Holy Ghost, as persons who speak evil of those things which they know not, but who, as brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, abuse themselves in those things which they know naturally; to whom is wo;—who have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core; who are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foming out their own shame: wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.—These are wells without water, clouds that are carried about with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure, through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were (seemed) clean (or for a little, or a while, as the margin justly reads), escaped from them who live in error: while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom

whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (preached to them in the gospel, which they have not really understood and believed, as God's word, upon God's own authority; but as they themselves, according to their own foolish and carnal notions have conceived of it), they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known (in the way of preaching and outward manifestation) the way of righteousness (which they have not understood), than after they have known it (as declared unto them by the Holy Ghost), to turn from the holy commandment (the gospel) delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned unto his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.—Here remark, that these persons above described, and all such as they, are no more represented as believers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, than those mentioned, and declared reprobate concerning the faith by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, in the vii, viii, and xv. chapters of John; whose condemnation it was, that the light came into the world, and shined among them, even Jesus Christ, the light and the life of men, and the darkness comprehended not that light; for these unhappy men among whom that light shined, loved darkness rather than that light; because their deeds were evil: for they were of their father the Devil, whose lusts they did—And John is witness, that whatever was, or may be in time coming, the profession and outward appearance of such kind of persons, they never were in times past, nor can, for the same reason, in times to come, be of God, and of the truth of God, while they continue in the state and character above described. For he says expressly, Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us; but they went

went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us, (not all of us in reality, but in appearance only). 1 John, ii. 18, &c.

94. Thus, in a doctrinal establishment of the assurance of faith, with its defences and vindications from the clamours, calumnies, cavillings, and frivolous pretended objections of its innumerable opposers, we have gone through the general tenor of the whole scriptures, and have found it certain, as the scriptures themselves, that this assurance of faith, even the perfect certainty of one's own personal justification and eternal salvation, freely given to him of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the communication and ministry of the Holy Ghost, is, in the very nature of the thing itself, absolutely essential, as the living soul to a living man, to the very existence of a Christian; and, consequently, absolutely essential also, as life in a man to breathing, motion and action, to the performance of every Christian duty whatsoever—Even as all the real rational obedience of sons and servants to parents and masters, flows alone from the consciousness, and the constraining influence of that consciousness, of the respective mutual relations, with their connections and circumstances, subsisting between both parties—Even as the apostle, addressing the beloved of God who are called to be saints, (and, surely, the apostle has not mistaken his argument!) reasons with them in this divine manner, alluring them to love and obedience by the alone consideration of God's love manifested to and bestowed upon them by the Holy Ghost, through the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, and triumphing with them in what he says—I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, now manifested to you in predestinating, calling, justifying, sanctifying, glorifying you in Christ, making all things work together for your good, guiding you to death, and afterwards receiving you into his everlasting rest in the heavenly city which he hath provided for you, and upon which account he declares he is not ashamed to be called your God,—by all these mercies, I beseech you, brethren, present your bodies—your whole persons—all your powers, faculties, members—soul, body, spirit—as living sacrifices—of

praise, love, obedience and joy—thank-offerings—holy and acceptable before God: which is your reasonable service.

95. Thus the mercies of God bestowed upon his saints, and believed by them to be their own, comprehend all the motives and arguments to real genuine evangelical Christian obedience; and if you take the assurance of these mercies and motives away, you take away at the same time the reason, nay, the very possibility of all Christian service; and you turn the whole word of God, speaking of these matters, into downright unintelligible jargon, and impenetrable nonsense!

96. It is this divine marriage, consisting in union, or oneness of spirit, between Christ and believers of the gospel, declared and manifested in their consciences by the Holy Ghost, that sanctifies these saints of God, with their services, and makes them holy to the Lord, and fruitful in every good word and work: for from him their fruit is found; and he worketh in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure: so that to themselves they nothing owe; and when they serve him, it is only with his own. He alone has made the happy difference; and by his grace they know they are what they are. Has he made them to be his servants, redeemed them by his own blood, and reconciled and joined them to himself in an everlasting covenant? And has he given them talents to be occupied to his praise? he gives them to be faithful too, faithful to the death, and then receives them into his joy.—If their fruit is good, it grows upon the ingrafted word. He first makes the tree good, and the fruit good also. Trees of righteousness shall they be called; planted by the grace of God in the courts of his own house, watered day by day, and night by night, with the rain and dew of heavenly love, ordained to bring forth much fruit to the glory of their heavenly Father; and in old age, when others fade, they shall be fair and flourishing; to shew that upright is the Lord: he is a rock to me; and he from all unrighteousness is altogether free.

97. Finally, this assurance of faith is not founded in one's pretended or even real piety, zeal, devotion, alms-giving, prayers, or practice; no, not in self-denied obedience,

obedience, labours of love, patience, nor perseverance in these; but it is itself in Christians the very foundation, and immediate principle of all these—Far less is it founded in a strong heated presumptuous imagination; nor in any blind enthusiastic impression upon the mind; nor in voices from heaven, dreams, visions, or new revelations; nor in building and supporting chapels; nor in compassing sea and land to make proslytes, and erect new societies; nor in being externally joined to, or separated from any society of men; nor in confessions, methods, and pretended absolutions of fellow-creatures, blasphemously calling themselves priests authorised of God—to gull men with such diabolical mummuries; nor in the accursed jargon of pretended appropriating acts of foolish self-deceived mortals; nor in covenants, oaths, and engagements, national, congregational, or personal; nor in dipping, or springling; nor in Moravian lust, which they, with impudent wickedness, entitle divine love; nor in blasphemous pretences to perfection in men; nor in the enchanting fervour of spirit in hymn-singing, or the delusive bewitching nature of instrumental music, ridiculously as blasphemously, now used in church- and chapel worship; nor in feigned quakerish inspirations, and gibberish of chattering folly; nor, surely, in the damnable Arminian lie, asserting that Christ died for all men, and that men are saved through the influence and operation of their own free will, and other pretended moral powers and principles, naturally remaining and residing in man; nor yet, most assuredly, in that satanical invention, that devils and all lapsed creatures shall at length be finally restored, and eternally saved.—No verily: in none of all these, nor in any thing like these, is the Christian's assurance of faith founded; but in the alone, immediate, direct evidence of God's testimony, commended and manifested as God's own infallible truth, communicated by the Holy Ghost to the Christian's own understanding and conscience: so that he hath the witness and undeniable evidence thereof in himself personally, and not in another—An evidence, not drawn from consequences, nor heads of reasoning, from other things, within him or around him; but immedi-

ately and directly, as said before, derived, communicated, received from God himself, the sole Lord and Instructor of his conscience; who is truth, and speaketh truth, and teacheth the knowledge and understanding thereof by his word; shewing this mercy to whom he will.—An evidence, in one word, like that of all other matters of fact founded in the pure testimony of divine revelation, save by which revelation there can be no knowledge whatsoever in man concerning them.—Such is the evidence which we have of the creation of the heavens and of the earth, with all their hosts; for it is by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; and that the things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear, Heb. xi. 3.—Such is the evidence of Adam's fall, and of our connection with him therein—of the giving of the Sinai law, the same law for sum and substance, both moral and ceremonial, which was published and kept on record from Adam to Moses—and of the impossibility of our being justified by the deeds thereof—and of the certainty of our just and legal condemnation thereby.—Such also is the evidence of there being a heaven, a hell, a resurrection of the just and unjust, and of an eternal judgment—with that of all other things of the kind, the evidence whereof is God's own single word—and ought not that to be enough to satisfy those who shall be judged by the words which God hath spoken?—Now say what ye can say, or dare say, ye fearful and unbelieving doubters, and deniers of God's grace and truth; is the evidence of the promises—the prophecies—the signs—types—figures of the Lord Jesus Christ—of his coming in the flesh—of his life—preaching—miracles—sufferings—death—burial—resurrection from the dead on the third-day, according to the scriptures—of his ascension into heaven—of his sending the Holy Ghost upon the apostles—and of their preaching the gospel to every creature under heaven—less sure, less certain than any other thing which the same God hath recorded in the holy scriptures?—And are not these declared to be the glad tidings, that God hath fulfilled his promise in that he hath raised Jesus again from the dead—and that through him is preached to you the forgiveness

forgiveness of sins—and that by him all that believe (these tidings to be true) are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses?—Has not the Father said, By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities?—Has not the Holy Ghost said, That the righteousness of God is by the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and upon all them that believe?—And that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?—And if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved?—Now, is it not evident from hence, as indeed from the whole sacred records, that God hath joined together these two, *viz.* justification, which is God's own act; and the belief of the truth in a man's heart concerning Jesus Christ, which belief is also God's own act, gift and work in man?—And what God hath joined together is it for man to put asunder? See Isa. liii. Rom. iii. iv. and x. Acts xiii. Gal. ii. and iii.—So those who believe the scripture testimony concerning Jesus Christ are justified and saved; and those who believe not shall be damned. Let God be true, and every man a liar.

98. Now I come to a conclusion of this long epistle, intended to wipe off that almost universal, base and blasphemous aspersion of Antinomianism, thrown by Satan and his hypocritical emissaries, upon this pure and holy doctrine, the assurance of faith, as stated and vindicated in the holy scriptures, for which we have been here contending, but not apologizing; because it needs no apology, nor covering; but like light and truth, as it is, stands boldly forth unashamed, and unabashed before God and before man, in the naked majesty of its own genuine, glorious, divine appearance, to the utter and eternal blinding and confounding of all its slanderers, and vile invidious foes—whose censures I glory to scorn, whose malice I am bold in my God to defy.

99. Such, be it known to those who please to know, is the doctrine which I believe and preach, and contend for, as all my salvation, and all my desire, and shall do, by the good hand of my God upon me, unto my

ate it breath, when I know I shall, through his continued preserving mercy, render up my joyful spirit into the hands of my faithful Creator, who is able to keep that good thing which I have committed to him unto the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

100. Now, ascribing to the eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Spirit, these eternally distinct persons, who are one, eternal, living and true God, my Father, the God of my salvation, whose am I and all my ways, the kingdom, the power, and the glory for evermore—with thanks and praise to his holy name, who has been pleased to count me, who am nothing, worthy for his own glory, to be cast out of the synagogue, expelled the Tabernacle, and to have my name reproached, and all manner of evil spoken against me falsely for the sake of his own gospel; I remain, in the full assurance of faith, hope, and joy, before the Lord, waiting and praying for his second coming.

Dear SIR,

London.

Your real Friend,

W. B R O O K S B A N K.

REMARKS upon several TEXTS of SCRIPTURE: Containing a further vindication of the assurance of faith, against the corrupt glosses of Papists, Arminians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Glassites, and others.

THE Papists, followed by their younger, and equally degenerate brethren in iniquity, the Arminians in every denomination of profession, argue, as against justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, without the works of the justified person; so also against the assurance of justification, from these and similar passages, “He that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous.” John iii. 7. and, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” James ii. 24.—Allowing thereby, that a man’s own works enter, as essential ingredients, into the composition of that righteousness whereby he is justified; and consequently, after

the

the same manner, into the evidence or ground of his assurance of justification.

Remark. In these, and all such texts, the reasoning proceeds from the external visible effects to the internal invisible cause, that is, from the outward actions to the inward principles: and these apparent effects, in conjunction with a good confession of the saving truth, afford the only possible ground that one man can have to judge by of the faith and justification of another man in the sight of God. For many there be that in words professe that they know God, yet in works deny him: saying, Lord, Lord, and yet in no respect doing the things which he commandeth. Therefore the apostle introduceth the words of the first cited text, which is addressed to the fully assured sons of God, in this manner, saying, for their direction in judging of the pretensions of other men to the same faith and hope of the gospel, " Little children, let no man deceive you: he that " doth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Christ) is " righteous"—even as in the nature of things, the tree which bringeth forth good fruit, must of necessity in itself be first a good tree before it possibly can produce its own natural effect, namely, that same good fruit; and the fountain which sendeth forth good water, must, antecedently to, and independently of its own streams, in its own very nature, be a genuine good fountain: for who ever gathered grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Or what bitter fountain ever sent forth sweet waters?—What tree was ever engrafted and made good by means of its own good fruits? Or what cause was ever made to exist by means of its own effect?—Thus, as growing fruits and flowing streams are not the caules, but the effects and evidences of the respective nature and condition of trees and fountains; so good works are only the effects and apparent evidences, but not the causes and constituent grounds of the faith and righteousness of the saints of God.—And to this very purpose the apostle James, in the context of the forecited passage of his epistle, not treating of that righteousness whereby a man is justified, or constituted righteous in the sight of God, says, in express terms, " I will shew thee my faith by my works."—Meaning evidently,

evidently, that he would, as far as his fellow-men could be entitled, or enabled to judge, demonstrate the reality of his faith, not by a mere profession in words only, but also by a substantial undeniable evidence thereof in works : which he establishes also as the practice of all saints by the notable examples there condescended upon, of Abraham and Rahab, whose faith was acknowledged by the Lord God himself, who had bestowed that precious gift of his grace upon them, before those recommended works of theirs were, or could be, brought forth to the manifestation, praise and glory of that same divine communicated grace, from whence alone they sprung.—Moreover, such works could have been no discovery of faith in the workers of them, unless the faith to be discovered had been real and previous to the discovery ; for good works, like true witnesses, do not constitute, or cause to exist, the facts which they bear testimony unto, but are only the means of attesting and establishing these facts as true before men, which were true and real in themselves in the sight of God previous to any such attestation and establishment before the world.—Thus, the payment of a debt is one thing, and the legal discharge which evidences that payment, is another ;—to be lawfully married, and to prove one's marriage, are quite distinct affairs ;—to be innocent of a crime whereof one is unjustly accused, and to be legally exculpated by proper witnesses of that crime, are altogether, in their own nature, separate points ; yet nothing is more common, and well understood in the language of men, (the same which the Holy Ghost uses in all the scriptures), than to say, that the debtor who produces his creditor's discharge, hath cleared or absolved himself of the debt in question ; that the woman who brings a legal proof of her marriage, hath justified her pretensions to her husband, and made her claimed relation good ; and that the man whose innocence is properly attested by sufficient evidence, is by that said evidence also legally justified.—In this declarative manner, men are said to be justified or condemned, in the day of judgment, by their works.—And in this sense, and in this alone, it is no less evident, that Abraham was said to be justified by his works when he had offered up

Isaac.

Haac.—For in the sight of God Abraham was justified at least full forty years before that event happened, and more than ten of these years before Isaac was born. In this sense also, God himself is said to be justified (that is, declared just) in his sayings, and clear when he is judged, (that is, when he is known, and his ways considered and understood)—Thus Jesus Christ, the Mediator and Surety, was justified (declaratively) in the Spirit—And wisdom is justified of her children, after the same manner.—So works justify before me, to make good the pretensions of a believer to that faith which he professes, and claims as his proper possession and enjoyment before God.—Thus faith is made perfect by works; as Christ was made perfect, (namely, in his obedience) by suffering: as he said, I work miracles to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected; and upon the cross, It is finished, or perfected, meaning his obedience to the death.

2. Methodists, with one voice, to shew their wisdom, and discernment in the things of God, produce these following with a multitude of parallel places, for the establishment of doubts and fears in the hearts of God's beloved ones, concerning their interest in his saving love.—“ Fear not, Abram.” Gen. xxi. 1.—“ Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.” Isa. xl. 1.—“ Fear not, little flock.” Luke xii. 32.

Remark. Let any person read these, and such like sentences, to the end, and he cannot help seeing how deceitfully those kind of people handle the word of God.—In the first text, the father of the faithful, the friend of God, being astonished in a vision at the glory of the Lord appearing unto him, is saluted and revived with these tender words, “ Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”—In the second text, the preaching of the gospel is ushered in with the words already cited, and followed by these,—“ And cry unto her (Jerusalem) that her warfare (or appointed time), is accomplished, and that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.”—In the third text, the Lord having warned his disciples of the tribulation they were to meet with,

with in this world for his name's sake, comforts them with the assurance that they should enjoy the eternal kingdom along with himself, according to the good pleasure of their heavenly Father.

3. The Westminster Confession affirms, That one who doubteth of his interest in Christ—may have true interest in Christ; though he be not assured thereof, &c. from Isa. i. 10. “Who is among you,” &c.

Remark. This passage is so far from being an evidence, as the Westminster divines alledge, That one may have true interest in Christ, though he be not assured thereof, that it is a decisive evidence of the very reverse of what they affirm; for how can one fear and obey the Lord without knowing the Lord as his own God and Father? The whole tenor of inspired writ declares the supposition impossible in the nature of things. The darkness, therefore, and want of light here spoken of, as this and the whole following chapter clearly shew, must, of necessity, be only that outward kind of temporal darkness, and want of light concerning the times, seasons, and other providential dispensations, which the Father hath reserved in his own power; which all saints, in all ages, have ever been, and shall be subjected unto, till the heavens and the earth be no more, even during their whole pilgrimage through this world; while, at the same time, they constantly walk in the brightness of the glory of the Lord, which hath arisen upon them as their eternal light and life.—Thus Abraham fully knew the Lord, whom he believed to be his sun and shield; yet went forth at the commandment of the Lord, not knowing whither he went.—Thus Paul, knowing whom he had believed, went bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing what was to befall him there.—Thus all saints are the children of the light, and of the day; and can confidently say, upon incontestable evidence, before God and before man, “We are not of the night, nor of darkness; for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain eternal salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thess. v. Accordingly they are all addressed in this manner by the Holy Ghost, who has enlightened them; “Remember, that ye were sometime darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord: walk

walk as children of the light," Eph. v. Yet none of them knew the day, nor the hour of their Lord's coming, nor what should be on the morrow, nor even what an hour should bring forth. But they all endure like Moses, as seeing Him who is invisible, and having an eye to the recompence of reward, possessing their souls in patience, as knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, and saying, "Amen! even so come, Lord Jesus.

The second text, which the divines advance in support of their doubts and fears, reads thus, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." 1 John v. 13.

Remark., Read the context. How should the believers of the gospel have known that they had eternal life, if the Lord had not told them?—The third evidence you are to read in Psalms lxxxviii throughout, and lxxvii. 1—12. as interpreted and applied by them.

Remark. These psalms are not expressive of the private frames and experiences of the penmen; but prophetic and descriptive (like the xvi. xxii. xl. and lxix. &c.) of the person, character, mission, offices, sufferings, following glory and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Witness the Lord himself, Luke xxiv. 44. and his apostle, 1 Pet. i. 1, 10, 11, 12. *

The last specimen of almost unparalleled perversion of scripture, which I shall beg leave at present to remark a little upon, in those eminent standards and confessions of faith, is their strange use and improvement of Isaiah liv. 7—11. where the Lord says, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee," &c.

Remark. If these words, in their due connection, contain a standing evidence against the personal assurance of faith in the saints of God, then they contain also a standing evidence, that the Lord and his apostles knew nothing of what they affirmed!—For this whole chapter, parallel to the xlix. and lx. of the same prophet, is explained

* For the establishment and illustration of this argument at large, see "The Psalms paraphrased according to the New Testament interpretation." To be had, with the other publications of the same author, at the places mentioned in the title-page of this essay.

explained by the Lord, John vi. 45. as a declaration, that all believers of the gospel are taught of God, and have eternal life—And by the apostle, to the same purpose, Gal. iv. 27. That the Gentiles are called into the same marvellous light and liberty of the sons of God, which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all believers of the same gospel from the beginning of the world enjoyed—augmented with this illustrious difference, that now the day is broke, and the shadows fled away, and the true light shineth, like the meridian sun, without the darkness of a ceremonial cloud, or interposition of any Mosaic vail.—For shame! why should Protestants say, that ignorance is the mother of devotion? Why do they not leave those sons of perdition against whom they protest, to play satanical tricks with a *Thou art Peter—And upon this rock—and This is my body, &c.* But let God be true, and every man, Papist or Protestant, that useth the word of God deceitfully, a liar!

Last of all, the Glassites, with other slips of the same bitter root, set aside the direct testimony of God as the ground of their assurance, and in place thereof found it upon their pretended brotherly love, as the Papists and Arminians also do, from these words, “ We “ know that we have passed from death unto life, be-“ cause we love the brethren.” 1 John iv. 14.

Remark. Far be it from Christians to speak against the real meaning, or to act contrary to the spirit of this passage. But surely it must be allowed, that one can have no evidence from these words, or from his own practice, that he is passed from death unto life, unless he do himself at the same time actually know that he really doth love the brethren, or children of God, in deed and in truth.—Now the same apostle explains his own meaning in the fore-cited words, saying, ch. v. 4.—“ By this we know that we love the children of God, “ when we love God, and keep his commandments”—namely, “ That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”—So those who love the brethren, must first love God; and before they can love God, they must first believe and perceive the love that God hath to them.

F I N I S.



n,
d
r.
ne
d,
ne
—
ne
ue
x-
ny
y,
do
m
rt
c.
e-
!
he
od
of
a-
Ve
be-

oft
his
an
wn
ess
he
in
his
4-
od,
—
his
ave
en,
ney
to